



HOW TO...

Put your videos on the web

If you want to show off your home movie to your relatives on the other side of the world, burning a disc and popping it in the post will take too long – far quicker to put your film online, as Tom Royal explains

If you have a digital video camera, you'll know how easy it can be to edit your home movies and burn them to a DVD. But what if you want to share your masterpiece with a wider audience? You might not know that it's just as easy to show your video on the internet. Broadband means it's now possible to share high-quality video with friends and family anywhere in the world. However, you won't be very popular if you email large video files. A much better idea is to put them on to a personal web space for others to watch at their leisure. You might find that you have some web space included with your internet service provider (ISP) package. Alternatively, you will find that there are plenty of cheap and free packages available, such as GeoCities (<http://geocities.yahoo.com>).

You could just upload your finished video file to your website and provide a link for people to download it. This doesn't look very professional, though. A better solution is to let your visitors watch it in a neat window on your web page, complete with controls to pause or rewind it as they wish. All you need is a few megabytes of web space and a tool that can convert your video into a suitable format. Most video-editing software can do this, but in this article we will show you how to use Windows Movie Maker, which is included in Windows XP.

1 Click Start, Program, Accessories and select Windows Movie Maker to launch it. Use Windows Explorer to find the video file you want to convert, and drag and drop it on to the Collections panel in the centre of the Movie Maker screen. Alternatively, you can click Import video from the Movie Tasks panel on the left. However, this will split your video up using scene detection, which isn't very useful in this case.

2 Next, you can drag and drop the video on to the timeline at the bottom of the screen. You can edit the video if you wish, or move straight on by selecting Save Movie File from the File menu. When the menu appears, select the option to save your file for the web and click Next.

3 On the next screen, you can enter a name for your file. Click Next again, and you will be asked to choose the quality at which you want to save your file. Larger files look better, but will take longer for visitors with slow internet connections to watch. For this example, we will choose the highest quality,

384Kbit/s, because we know that most of our visitors have a broadband connection. Then you should click Next. Movie Maker will render your video to .wmv format. When it's done, you will be given the option to save a copy of your movie on your computer. Select this, then choose a location for your file and click Finish.

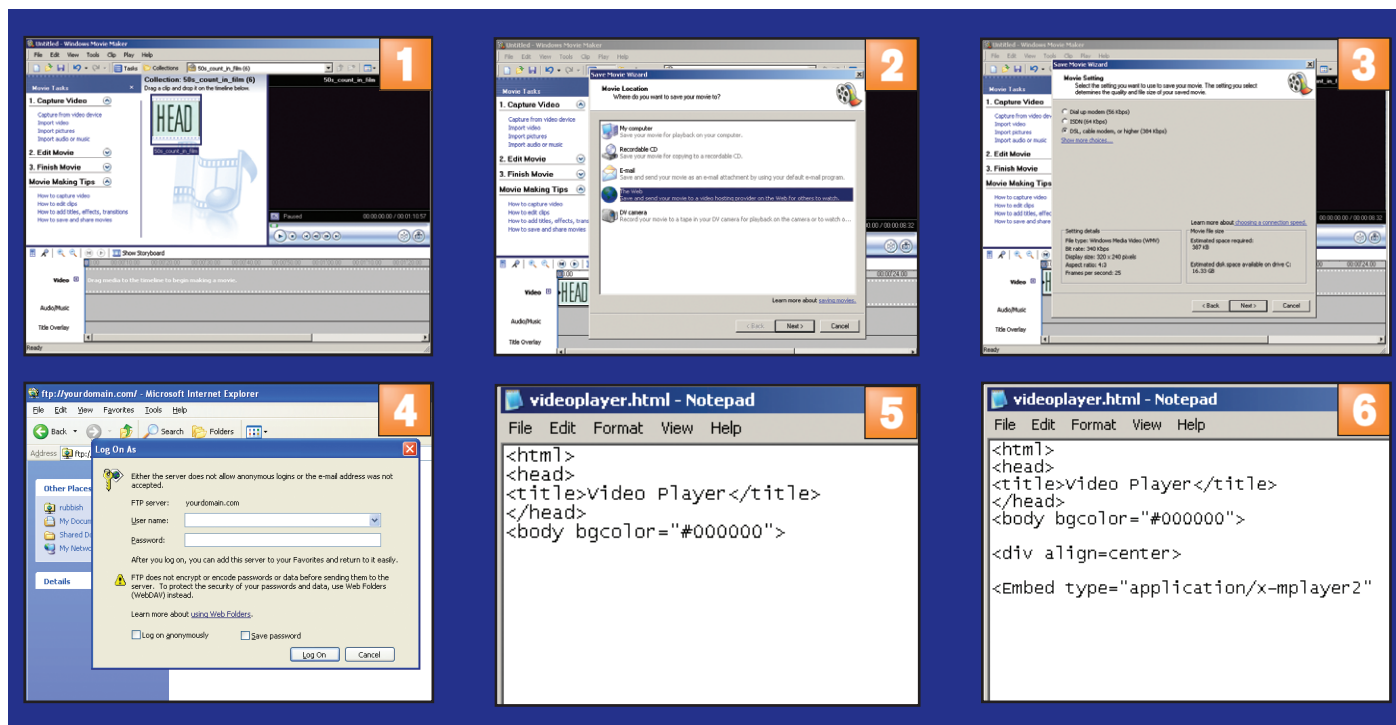
4 Your video footage is converted to a Windows Media Video (WMV) file that can be integrated into your website easily.

Create a directory called Video on your web server and then upload the file that you have just created into it. If you don't have any File Transfer Protocol (FTP) software, you can do this with Internet Explorer. Simply type the FTP address into the address bar, such as <ftp://yourdomain.com>, and then enter the user name and password given by your web space provider. You will then be able to drag and drop files and folders from

Windows just as you would when copying files on your hard disk.

EXPERT TIP

If you want to stream music on your website, create a Windows Media Audio (WMA) file – most video and audio editors can do this – and then create an HTML file similar to the one used for streaming video, replacing 'yourfilename.wmv' with the name of your audio file. As there's no video to display, you should adjust the height and width attributes to 45 and 300 respectively to show just the Media Control Panel.



5 The next step is to create a small web page that will display your video. Click Start, Programs, Accessories and Notepad, and then type the following lines:

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Video Player</title>
</head>
<body bgcolor="#000000">
```

This will give the page a black backdrop. However you can change this simply by entering a different hexadecimal colour code into the body tag. If you wanted a blue backdrop, for example, you would enter #0000FF. You'll find the full list of colours at www.december.com/html/spec/color.html. Save the file on your hard disk as videoplayer.html.

6 We want the video file to appear in the middle of this page, so we need to add the following line to centre it horizontally:

```
<div align=center>
```

Then we must add a link to the video file. There are two methods of embedding a video in HTML: the EMBED tag and the newer OBJECT method. In this example, we'll use EMBED, as it is simpler to write and works in more browsers. Add the following line to your HTML file, making sure not to close the tag with >:

```
<embed type="application/x-mplayer2">
```

7 You've told the browser to embed a video, but not which video to embed. We will place this web page inside the same folder as our video file. Add the following line:

```
src="./yourfilename.wmv">
```

If you want the video file to start playing as soon as it is ready, you must accompany this with the

following line. If you want to wait until the viewer presses the play button, replace the value "true" with "false":

```
autostart="true">
```

8 You then need to specify the size of the video window. Our video clip is 240 pixels high by 320 wide, but we also need to account for the height of the control bar that will appear beneath it. The Windows Media Player Control Panel is 45 pixels high, so we need our window to measure 320x285 pixels. To create this, we type the following lines:

```
height="285"
width="320">
```

The next line helps any computer that doesn't have Media Player installed. It shows the browser where it can download the software that is needed to view the file:

```
pluginspage="http://www.microsoft.com/
isapi/redir.dll?prd=windows&sbp=mediap
layer&ar=media&sba=plugin">
```

Finally, you have to instruct the browser to display the media controls. Do this by adding the following line and closing the EMBED tag with a >:

```
showcontrols="1">
```

9 This web page now contains all the information you need, so close up all the open tags by adding the following lines:

```
</embed>
</div>
</body>
</html>
```

Finally, save the file and upload it to your web server alongside the video file.

10 Test, test and test again. It's always necessary to make sure that your web pages look correct in as many browsers as possible, but it's particularly important when working with media files. Our page worked perfectly in Firefox and Internet Explorer 6, so most web users should see it correctly. On a Mac, Safari and Internet Explorer 5.2 correctly identified the Microsoft page where they could download the Media Player. After doing so, both the Mac browsers displayed the video correctly.

11 Usually this kind of video player will be displayed in a small pop-up window from the main website. To add this to your website, add a few lines of JavaScript to your web page. Open the page in your website that you want to link to the video and insert the following lines of JavaScript code into the top of the page. It should be added between the <head> and </head> tags as shown in the screenshot for this step:

```
<Script Language="JavaScript">
<!--
function videowin() {
var videoload = window.open('./video
player.html','videoplayer','width=40
0,height=350,menubar=0,toolbar=0,
status=0,location=0,scrollbars=0,
resizable=0'); }
// -->
</Script>
```

12 Finally, insert this line of code into the same web page between the <body> and </body> tags at the point where you want your video player link to appear:

```
<a href="javascript:videowin()">Click
here to view the video</a>
```

When the viewer clicks on this link, a small window will open that contains your video file, which they can then watch. 

